



Nature Bugs

PARENT HANDBOOK 2016

Welcome to the new Nature Bugs program!

Thank you for choosing the Nature Bugs program for your child. Gahanna Parks & Recreation believes that camp programs provide a unique opportunity for children at any age to grow and develop, interact with peers and adults, and foster resilience. With the Nature Bugs program being designed specifically for our younger campers, it is our hope to provide your child with a taste of summer camp programming, without having to be at camp all day long.

How?

Camp presents youth with a whole new set of challenges, some of which are easily accomplished, others which take persistence, grit, and gaining new skills. By providing camp programming that is developmentally appropriate for the younger ages, our Camp Staff will introduce campers to new skills, outdoor education, and team-building activities. Because of our love for camp and our belief in the positive youth development philosophy, we do not take this responsibility of fostering youth development lightly, and we are grateful for the opportunity to share in this growth with you and your child.

At Nature Bugs, our first priority is the safety and wellbeing of our campers. We are proud to uphold high standards that are supported by our program's policies and procedures, as well as by our qualified Camp Staff.

On behalf of the entire Nature Bugs staff, thank you for entrusting us with your child. We take pride in providing high quality experiences for you and your camper and look forward to an amazing inaugural summer of our Nature Bugs program!

If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know!

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Camp Director

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Department of Parks & Recreation

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Nature Bugs Core Belief & Mission

Our belief is that camp is the perfect outlet for kids to be kids, while simultaneously developing the resiliency necessary to successfully navigate the world around them. Not only do we provide the opportunity and support for children to grow and develop as individuals, we create lifelong memories and lasting relationships.

Nature Bugs Goals & Outcomes

1. Provide a structured and supportive environment for campers and staff alike.

Campers should feel safe at all times. A physically and emotionally supportive environment sets the stage for social learning and resilience, creating the opportunity for campers to overcome challenges, solve problems, and make mistakes without fear of judgment.

2. Promote campers' physical, social, and cognitive competence.

Campers are encouraged to ask for assistance, but also to work with peers and counselors to devise solutions to their problems; they will be challenged to resolve conflict with peers in a developmentally and socially appropriate manner. Counselors model clean communication by using positive, specific, and supportable words to communicate rules, analyze situations, and describe themselves and others.

Positive Youth Development – How We Achieve our Goals

The Nature Bugs approach draws heavily from Positive Youth Development (PYD) philosophy. In a broad sense, youth development refers to the stages that youth go through to acquire the attitudes, competencies, values, and social skills they need to become successful adults. Youth move through each developmental stage, they acquire a set of personal assets, or supports, that help them face the challenges ahead and become resilient. More specifically, PYD strategies focus on giving youth the chance to form relationships with caring adults, build skills, exercise leadership, and help their communities.

PYD focuses on encouraging and nurturing these critical assets, rather than reducing particular risks or preventing specific problems. In other words, can we guarantee that your child will never fall down while playing a team game in the field, make a bad decision, or experience minor conflict with another camper? **No.** But, we can assure you that our counselors will assist your child in a developmentally appropriate way to stand up and try again, understand and learn from his/her mistakes, or resolve the conflict at hand.

Friendship and Conflicts

It is wonderful to see children seek out friends each day, but it is also natural for some personalities to clash while spending three days a week together. Our counselors are trained to assist your child in working through his/her conflicts in a way that introduces and reinforces positive conflict resolution skills.

Your child will probably share both the positive and the negative events of the day with you in the afternoon. Conflicts at camp usually last less than five minutes, but can leave a lasting impression. Your child may want to revisit upsetting events from the day, needing parents to listen to what happened. It can be difficult to hear your child was upset, but please remember that conflicts are where children learn to deal with adversity and cope with disappointment - two crucial, lifelong skills.

Nature Bugs 2016 Weekly Schedule @ Friendship Park				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00-9:30 Opening Circle/Sunscreen	9:00-9:30 Opening Circle/Sunscreen	9:00-9:30 Opening Circle/Sunscreen	9:00-9:30 Opening Circle/Sunscreen	9:00-9:30 Opening Circle/Sunscreen
9:30-10:00 Free Time	9:30-10:00 Free Time	9:30-10:00 Free Time	9:30-10:00 Free Time	9:30-10:00 Free Time
10:00-10:30 Snack and Theme Activity	10:00-10:30 Snack and Theme Activity	10:00-10:30 Snack and Theme Activity	10:00-10:30 Snack and Theme Activity	10:00-10:30 Snack and Theme Activity
10:30-11:00 Team building/Social Skills activity	10:30-11:00 Outdoor Education	10:30-11:00 Sports and Games	10:30-11:00 Arts & Crafts	10:30-11:00 Team building/Social Skills activity
11:00-11:30 Free time	11:00-11:30 Free time	11:00-11:30 Free time	11:00-11:30 Free time	11:00-11:30 Free time
11:30 Pick up				

Camper Age Requirements

Children attending Nature Bugs must be 4 years old on or before their first day of summer camp, and may remain at camp until the day before their 7th birthday.

While Nature Bugs is available for children as young as four years, some children are not yet ready for camp. Please make sure your camper is ready for camp by asking yourself the following:

- Can my child attend to his or her own personal needs such as changing clothes, toileting and eating? Camp staff cannot assist children with these personal needs.
- Will my child generally follow simple directions and rules in a structured setting? Most rules are set for the safety of all campers, and children must generally be able to follow these rules in order to stay safe.

Hours

Nature Bugs runs Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 11:30am each day.

Where to Drop Off and Pick Up

Parents will drop their camper(s) off and pick them up at Friendship Park (150 Oklahoma Ave.). Drop off and pick up will take place at the Friendship Park Gazebo, unless otherwise noted by signs or communication from Camp Staff.

What to Bring to Camp

- **CLOSED-TOE ATHLETIC SHOES:** Please send your camper in closed toe shoes appropriate for active outdoor play. Old tennis shoes are best, because they are already broken in and will get very dirty. Sandals, flip flops, and crocs make everyday activities very difficult and put your camper at a greater risk to trip, fall, or sustain foot and ankle injuries.
For campers who come to camp without the proper footwear, staff will make the appropriate phone calls home, and campers will be asked to sit out from activities until proper footwear is acquired.
- **WATER BOTTLE:** Please send a refillable water bottle with your camper. It is important to keep your camper hydrated, and water does the best job. Drinks with high sugar and/or caffeine content do not hydrate your camper as well as water.
- **CHANGE OF CLOTHES:** We make every effort to notify parents if we plan on campers getting wet - creeking, water games, etc., but sometimes the fun is spontaneous! Please pack a change of clothes every day so that your camper will be comfortable no matter what the camp day brings.
- **BACKPACK:** To hold everything!
- **Please label EVERYTHING that comes to camp with your campers first and last name!**

Personal Belongings & Money – What NOT to Bring to Camp!

Campers are NOT to bring any personal belongings or money to camp, including but not limited to the following:

- Personal Sports Equipment
- Animals
- Electronic Devices (hand held video games, iPods, etc)
- Money
- Trading Cards, Collectibles, & Toys
- Alcohol and/or Drugs
- Weapons

Nature Bugs maintains a no tolerance policy for possession of alcohol, drugs, or weapons. Proper authorities will be called, and disciplinary action will be taken.

If your child brings personal belongings or money to Nature Bugs, the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation is not responsible for any damaged or lost items.

Daily Sign-in/Sign-out Procedures

Campers MUST be signed-in to camp every morning, and signed-out every afternoon by a person listed on the Health History Form as a parent, guardian, second parent, second guardian, emergency contact or additional authorized person, **ABSOLUTELY NO EXCEPTIONS!** ALL authorized persons must show appropriate identification (driver's license, photo ID with name) to remove a participant from Nature Bugs, **ABSOLUTELY NO EXCEPTIONS!**

You MUST show appropriate photo identification EVERY time you remove your child from camp, even if the counselors know you by name.

Early Drop-Off/Late Pick-Up

Campers may not be dropped off before 9:00am or picked up after 11:30am. It is your responsibility to make every effort to pick up your camper(s) before closing time. Drop-offs earlier than 9:00am and pick-ups later than 11:30am will be assessed an additional fee.

Fee Structure

A flat fee of \$10.00 will be assessed to those individuals dropping off before 9:00am or picking up after 11:35am. In addition to the flat \$10.00 fee, a fee of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed. For example, a camper dropped off at 8:45am will be assessed the flat \$10.00 plus an additional \$15.00 for the 15 minutes before 9:00am (bringing the total to \$25.00). Likewise, a camper picked up at 11:45am will be assessed the flat \$10.00 plus an additional \$10.00 for the 10 minutes between 11:35-11:45am, bringing the total to \$20.00.

Payment of Fees

Payment of all fees is expected at the time of drop-off or pick-up. Camp staff will provide a written receipt for all fees paid. Campers will not be permitted to attend camp until ALL fees are paid.

Planned Absences/Sick Days

If your camper(s) will be missing camp for any reason (illness, vacation, appointments, etc.), please notify Camp and the Department of Parks and Recreation. For safety reasons, Camp Staff will call parents/guardians of unexcused campers to make sure they are not planning on attending camp for that day.

Staff

Nature Bugs is an environment in which all camp staff:

- Interact with families in a comfortable, respectful, welcoming way
- Treat participants with respect and listen to what they say
- Treat co-workers with respect and value their perspective
- Teach participants to interact with one another in positive ways
- Teach participants to make responsible choices and encourage positive outcomes
- Are sensitive to the culture and language of participants
- Strive to establish meaningful community collaborations
- Are energetic, positive, and have fun!

Each staff person is qualified and competent to provide wholesome leadership and direction to each child, according to his/her needs. All staff must meet the following requirements to be employed by Gahanna Parks & Recreation as a Nature Bugs counselor:

- At least 18 years of age
- Successful interview with the Camp Director or Recreation Superintendent
- Two positive reference checks and verification of previous work history
- Negative drug screen
- No record in the National Sex Offender Public Database
- No more than 6 points on driver license
- No criminal record on BCI fingerprint background check or FBI background check if lived out of state in past five years.
- Year-round camp staff who are continually employed by the City receive a BCI fingerprint background check and driver's license check annually.

Camp T-shirts

One t-shirt is provided to each camper registered for Nature Bugs. Additional t-shirts can be purchased for \$8.00 each from Camp Staff.

Parent Access and Participation

Parents/guardians of children enrolled in camp have unlimited access to the program during operational hours for the purpose of contacting the child and/or evaluating the premises or the care provided. Upon entering the park, the parent must sign-in as a visitor and notify the camp staff of his/her presence. Parents may contact the Camp Director at 342-4250 to discuss any concerns regarding the camp program. Your input for improvements to our program is encouraged and greatly appreciated!

Parent Communication

Camp Staff will notify parents/guardians of camper illness or injury via a phone call or written documentation in the ABC Log or an Incident Report. For major or severe illness and injury, Camp Staff will call the camper's parent/guardians as soon as possible to inform them of the situation and any additional care or treatment needed.

ABC Log

The ABC log is our parent/guardian notification system that allows for camp staff to effectively communicate events that occur throughout the day. **A**ccidents, **B**ehaviors, and **C**omments are logged throughout the day by counselors, and must be read and initialed during sign-out by parents/guardians. We try to communicate more than just negative incidents or behavior issues – our counselors are wonderful at recognizing camper achievements, and strive to communicate those just as frequently!

Behavior Management

Our staff, while discouraging inappropriate behaviors, focuses on providing positive reinforcement for acceptable behavior, and encourages learning as a natural part of growth and development. We want each camper to have a positive experience at camp, and to experience as much of the camp session as possible.

Accordingly, the following actions will be taken when addressing behavior that is unacceptable in a camp environment:

1. **Reminder.** "Please ask before..."
2. **Verbal Warning.** Counselors will be sure the camper understands why they are receiving a warning. Parents may be notified via ABC log.
3. **Timeout within their group/activity.** Timeout length is equal to the camper's age (a five year old will sit in timeout for five minutes). Parents are notified via ABC log.
4. **Timeout with the Assistant Camp Manager.** Incident is documented and parents are notified via phone.
5. **Camper is sent home for the remainder of the day.** Parents will be notified and required to pick up their child immediately.
6. **Camper is sent home for the remainder of the week.** If a camper returns to camp, and the problem persists, they will be sent home for the rest of the week with no refund.

*If a child is sent home for the week **twice** during the camp season they will be removed from camp for the remainder of the season with **no refund**.*

In addition, the following offenses may result in **immediate expulsion from camp for the remainder of the summer with no refund.**

- Physical Violence
- Possession of Alcohol, Drugs, or Weapons
- Physical, Verbal, and Cyber Bullying (including taunting, threats, blackmail, etc.)
- Leaving the Grounds
- Nudity
- Any Other Criminal Acts

Fighting

Campers are ***always*** sent home for ***at least*** the remainder of the day after participating in a fight. It does not matter who started the fight, or who is to “blame,” all participants must go home - a fight will not start with only one participant. A camper may be removed from camp for the remainder of the week at the discretion of the Camp Director.

Bullying

Bullying is when one or more people exclude, tease, taunt, gossip, hit, kick, or put down another person with the intent to hurt another. Bullying happens when a person or group of people want to have power over another and use their power to get their way, at the expense of someone else. Bullying can also happen through cyberspace: through the use of e-mails, text messaging, instant messaging, social media, and other less direct methods. This type of bullying can also lead to persons being hurt during or between the camp seasons and be especially hurtful when persons are targeted with meanness and exclusion.

At Nature Bugs bullying is inexcusable, and we have a firm policy against all types of bullying. Our Camp philosophy is based on our mission statement which ensures that every camper has the opportunity to try new things, form positive relationship with other children, and overcome challenges in a safe environment, free from judgment. We work together as a team to ensure that campers gain self-confidence, make new friends, and go home with great memories.

Unfortunately, persons who are bullied may not have the same potential to get the most out of their camp experience. Our leadership addresses all incidents of bullying seriously and trains staff to promote communication with their coworkers and their campers so both staff and campers will be comfortable alerting us to any problems during their camp experience and between camp seasons. Every person has the right to expect to have the best possible experience at camp, and by working together as a team to identify and manage bullying, we can help ensure that all campers and staff have a great summer at Nature Bugs.

Did you know that up to 60% of all bullying instances are not reported? Nature Bugs seeks to maintain a bully-free community for our campers and staff. In order to do this, we need you and your children’s help! The first step to ending bullying is to tell someone -we cannot address the issue until we are aware of it. If your child is the target of bullying ***or*** they witness another child being bullied, *please encourage them to tell a counselor as quickly as possible!*

Help Your Child Understand What Bullying Is . . . and Isn't

Bullying involves three things: an intent to harm (it's *deliberate*), repeated acts or threats of aggressive behavior, and a power imbalance. Kids who bully are consciously choosing to be cruel, with no sense of regret or remorse—even when the targets of bullying show or express their hurt or tell the aggressors to stop. Sometimes they're hurting too, thinking that hurting someone else can stop their pain.

Here's one way our community explains the different tiers of hurtful behavior:

- When someone says or does something unintentionally hurtful and they do it once, that's **RUDE**.
- When someone says or does something intentionally hurtful and they do it once, that's **MEAN**.
- When someone says or does something intentionally hurtful and they keep doing it—even when you tell them to stop or show them that you're upset—that's **BULLYING**.

There may be times that your child will experience another camper being “rude” or “mean.” This is a normal childhood occurrence, and our counselors are trained to guide your child through those experiences. Bullying should never be a normal childhood occurrence, and it's important to recall the 3 defining characteristics of true bullying:

1. **It is deliberate** – a bully's intention is to hurt someone.
2. **It is repeated** – a bully often targets the same victim again and again.
3. **It involves a power imbalance** – a bully chooses victims she or he perceives as vulnerable.

Inclement Weather

Nature Bugs has specific inclement weather procedures for a multitude of circumstances that are revisited by camp staff, police, and fire on an annual basis. . In case of severe weather, campers at Friendship Park will be sheltered at the City of Gahanna's Parks Complex (located across the parking lot at Friendship Park). In the event of rain, campers may continue with scheduled activities or similar activities under the Friendship Park shelter. During inclement weather days, Camp and Parks & Recreation Staff may decide to make alternate arrangements for other programming opportunities.

Excessive Heat Policy

Nature Bugs takes place outside with no access to air condition. When code red alerts and high temperature warnings are issued, program activities may be modified. Scheduled events may be substituted with alternative activities such as less active games, water play, and activities taking place under the shelter. Camp Staff are trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness and are provided with guidelines to prevent heat illness. Our guidelines are based on the heat index, a calculation that combines air temperature and relative humidity to more accurately describe what the temperature “feels like.”

Emergency Procedures

All Nature Bugs staff are charged with responding to emergencies. The general principles that govern all emergency situations apply:

- Evaluate the situation completely and as quickly as possible (call 911 if appropriate).
- Provide basic care consistent with training level.
- Take care of the most important conditions first--maintain open airway, control severe bleeding, and prevent shock.
- Redirect and engage campers not involved in the emergency in non-threatening, low impact activities until the emergency has passed or a debriefing takes place (with assigned mental health care professionals if necessary).

Health & Wellness

All regularly scheduled Nature Bugs Staff must have a valid CPR/First Aid/AED certification to be employed by Gahanna Parks & Recreation as a Nature Bugs counselor. Camp Staff are prepared to use basic first aid skills to address common camp injuries such as: scraped knees, insect bites, bee stings, bloody noses, and other small injuries that occur during active outdoor play. For specific Medical Standing Orders please contact the Department of Parks & Recreation at (614)342-4250.

- Camp Staff are authorized to perform the following: flush minor scrapes and cuts with water, clean minor scrapes and cuts with alcohol swabs, apply bandages when appropriate, distribute and assist with the application of cold packs when appropriate, distribute medications as indicated on health history forms, provide more advanced first-aid (within the scope of training) as requested by parent/guardian when accompanied by physician's instructions (assist with epipen, etc.).
- Camp Staff are expected to call either a camper's parent/guardian or 911, depending on the severity of the injury/illness, for any medical situation that requires treatment other than those listed above.
- Camp Staff are expected to follow best practices to prevent disease transmission (use of gloves, hand washing, etc.) at all times when dealing with ANY medical situation.
- Incident forms will be completed after any treatment is provided and notes will then be recorded in the ABC log.

Medication

ALL medications (including over-the-counter or nonprescription drugs) to be administered at camp **MUST BE LISTED ON THE HEALTH HISTORY FORM AND SUBMITTED TO CAMP STAFF.** Parent/guardians are requested to bring enough medication to last the entire camp day. Medications MUST be kept in the original packaging/bottle that identifies the prescribing physician (if a prescription drug), the name of the medication, the dosage, and the frequency of administration— Nature Bugs WILL NOT ACCEPT OR ADMINISTER any medications not in the original packaging/bottle. Medications that meet the above guidelines will be administered in the following way:

- All medications received by Nature Bugs will be stored in a locked container (refrigeration available upon request) and administered according to the health history form and physician's instructions by the camper's assigned counselor(s) or another designated staff person.
- The Nature Bugs staff member administering the medication will note the date/time that the medication was given on the Medication Administration Log.
- When at an off-site location, the camper's assigned counselor(s) will carry those medications in a small first-aid kit and administer those medications appropriately, including updating the Medication Administration Log upon returning to camp.
- Parent/guardians may come to camp, sign-out their camper, give any medication they feel is appropriate, and then sign their camper back into the program.

If a camper brings medication to camp that is not listed on the health history form, AND/OR does not meet the above guidelines, AND/OR is not submitted to Nature Bugs staff (camper keeps in backpack or lunch bag) that medication will be stored in the locked medication container until a parent/guardian is able to retrieve it and will NOT be administered to the camper. In the case that said medication is necessary for the health and well-being of the camper, the parent/guardian will be contacted to come and administer said medications. At this time the camper's Health History Form must be updated on ePACT or the camper will not be permitted to remain at Nature Bugs.

Child Abuse

Ohio Revised Code 2151.421—Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

By state law, all agencies that provide youth's programming are required to report questionable bruises or marks that are repetitious and obvious to the staff. Likewise, should a child indicate to a staff member that abuse, either physical or sexual, is happening to them, it is our obligation to report the discussion to Franklin County Children's Services.

Program Evaluation

The City of Gahanna is committed to continually improving the quality of our camp programs. Surveys relating to all aspects of the Nature Bugs camp program (programming, administration, facilities, staff, etc.) are utilized to ensure that an accurate assessment of the program is performed on an annual basis. Additionally, the Department of Parks & Recreation welcomes your feedback at any time. Please contact the Camp Director with any questions, concerns or suggestions.

Refund and Credit Policy

ABSOLUTELY NO CREDITS, REFUNDS, OR TRANSFERS WILL BE ISSUED FOR CUSTOMER REQUESTED CANCELLATIONS AFTER MAY 13, 2016.

Gahanna does not offer customer-requested refunds for any programs, including Camp. Customer requested cancellations or transfers received on or before May 13, 2016 will receive department household credit *only*.

- Credits expire one year from the date issued.
- Customers using a household balance to register for a program will forfeit their credit, if they choose to un-enroll in the program.

All customer requested cancellations and changes are subject to a \$25 administrative fee.

- This includes transferring from one week of camp to another.
- If changes to registration are made more than one time, multiple administrative fees will apply.

Absolutely no credits or transfers will be issued for customer requested cancellations after May 13, 2016.

- This includes missing any portion of camp due to vacation, schedule conflict, or any non-emergency situation.

Refunds or credits for hardship and emergency situations must be requested by letter to the Department Director.

- *Hardship situations* are defined as a job transfer of 25 miles or more away or serious medical condition. Requests must be accompanied by proof and should be presented within 2 weeks of first occurrence impacting camp attendance.
- *Emergency situations* are defined as camper illness, injury, or medical emergency. Requests must be accompanied by proof and should be presented no more than one week after affecting camp attendance.